

# KANSAS TERRITORY ~ 1860's

## *Western Express Mail Routes*

### Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company

The company known as the "C.O.C&P." formed in February 1860 by three of the former owners of the bankrupt Jones & Russell Express Company. The three main partners, Russell, Majors and Waddell, were the majority stock holders. They added new capital to buy equipment, expanded stage stations and routes making the company the largest express carrier in the territory.



**Denver City, K. T. November 20 ~ St. Joseph, Mo. November 26, (1860)**

**Letter to Mrs. P. C. Hale, Milwaukee Wisconsin. Sent from Denver City with oval express date stamp received November 26 at St. Joseph entering the mail with double circle postmark at St. Joseph, Mo. on Nov. 27, with 3 cent red Nesbitt entire and additional 3 cent dull red #26 added with grid cancels. The obverse bears an undated Denver City express strike. Ex-Barkhausen**

In May of 1860 the company acquired the Chorpenning mail contract for service from Salt Lake to California. Russell, Majors and Waddell then developed an idea for the Pony Express a new fast mail service. It would carry special mail running from St. Joseph to San Francisco covering this long, and often dangerous distance in 10 to 14 days.

Things went well for a time, but soon heavy losses set in, and in the end the Pony Express became obsolete as the Transcontinental Telegraph was completed. Business conditions were changing rapidly, and the company ran out of cash in early 1862. Some employees referred to C.O.C. & P.P. Express as "Clean Out of Cash and Poor Pay" On March 21, 1862 the company went into bankruptcy being sold at public auction to Ben Holladay for the sum of \$100,000 dollars at Kansas City, Missouri.

